



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Final Rule Changes to the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Individual Fishing Quota Program: Online Account Application Requirements

NOAA Fisheries Service announces a final rule for the commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery Individual Fishing Quota Program, which published in the *Federal Register* on November 4, 2011 (74 FR 68339). This rule becomes effective on December 4, 2011.

Regulations implemented in 2006 (Amendment 26 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan) stated that as of January 1, 2012, all U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens are eligible to receive commercial red snapper shares and allocation. Prior to this date, only participants with a valid commercial reef fish permit could establish online accounts and purchase red snapper shares and allocation.

Regulations implemented in 2009 (Amendment 29 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan) established the Gulf of Mexico Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota program. Under the revised Magnuson-Stevens Act of 2007, regulations require any new participant in individual fishing quota programs to be U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens. Currently, information verifying U.S. citizenship is not collected on federal reef fish permit applications.

Shares:

A percentage of the commercial quota

Allocation:

Amount of annual pounds (gutted weight)

final rule establishes the requirement that any U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien applying for participation, or any person previously issued an online account by NOAA Fisheries Service, must submit an online account application to obtain or maintain an online account. Information requested will include: certification that the applicant is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien, contact information (name, address, and phone number), date of birth, tax identification number, and any corporate shareholder information, if applicable. **All participants in both the red snapper and grouper-tilefish programs will be required to submit the application every two years in order to keep an active online account.** Should a participant no longer have a federal reef fish permit that was previously issued an online account, they will still be required to submit the online account application every two years in order to keep the account active. This information is required to ensure participants meet the requirements of the program, provide an address to receive mail regarding the program, and to ensure no single entity in the program acquires an excessive amount of shares.

Non-permitted participation in the red snapper individual fishing quota program

Beginning January 1, 2012, any U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien will be eligible to purchase red snapper shares and allocation from current shareholders. A non-permitted participant in the program will be able to obtain and transfer red snapper shares and allocation only. **Red snapper cannot be harvested with allocation alone; a federal commercial reef fish permit is required for commercial harvest of any reef fish.**

ELEMENTS OF THE FINAL RULE

Online Account Application

Participants of the individual fishing quota program are required to establish an online account. The

Collection of citizenship information for permitted individual fishing quota program participants

All participants with a valid federal reef fish permit in the individual fishing quota program will be required to submit the application every two years in order to keep an active online account. This is in addition to the annual renewal of the application for the federal reef fish permit, which is required for an individual fishing quota participant to harvest and purchase allocation and shares.

Addresses

Electronic copies of the final rule may be obtained from the e-Rulemaking Portal at:

<http://www.regulations.gov>, or from NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue

South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.

Mail: Catherine Bruger, NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.

For more information on the final rule please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](http://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov) on the Southeast Regional Individual Fishing Quota Web site: ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.